

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02
SS-15 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 PA-01
USIA-06 /077 W
-----089316 181744Z /43

R 171836Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY MADRID
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3521
INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS
AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT
AMEMBASSY RABAT
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 01786

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1
TAGS: PEPR, SS, MO, AG, SP
SUBJECT: SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA RETURNS TO MADRID
REF: MADRID 1504 AND MADRID 1756

1. SPANISH AMBASSADOR MANUECO RETURNED TO MADRID LATE FEBRUARY 13, ONLY FIVE DAYS AFTER HE HAD GONE TO ALGIERS FOR THE FIRST TIME FOLLOWING HIS RECALL FOR CONSULTATIONS IN LATE DECEMBER IN PROTEST OVER ALGERIAN ASSERTIONS ABOUT THE CANARY ISLANDS. THERE HAS BEEN CONSIDERABLE PRESS SPECULATION OVER WHAT IS IN FACT GOING ON, AND ONE ACCOUNT HAS CHARGED THAT MANUECO "FAILED" IN THE TRIP'S ALLEGED PURPOSE OF EXTRACTING FROM THE ALGERIANS THE FORMAL REPLY TO THE SPANISH PROTEST NOTE THAT THE GOS IS STILL WAITING FOR. HOWEVER, WE THINK IT MORE LIKELY THAT MANUECO'S TRIP WAS A GESTURE AIMED AT KEEPING ALL CHANNELS OF COMMUNICATION OPEN AND AT SHOWING THE GOS APPRECIATED ALGERIAN MUZZLING OF CUBILLO.

2. MEETING WITH JOURNALISTS FEBRUARY 16, FOREIGN MINISTRE
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OREJA DECLARED SPAIN WANTS "CORDIAL RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA AND MOROCCO. I WANT THERE TO BE STABILITY IN THE MAGHREB, BECAUSE THIS BENEFITS SPAIN AND THE WHOLE ZONE." OREJA ALSO ACKNOWLEDGED THAT "CURRENTLY" THERE IS "A CERTAIN PARALYSIS" IN ALGERIAN-SPANISH RELATIONS, BUT ADDED "AT EVERY MOMENT IT HAS BEEN LEFT CLEAR THAT SPAIN WANTS TO MAINTAIN GOOD RELATIONS WITH ALGERIA."

THE PURPOSE OF MANUECO'S TRIP, OREJA WAS QUOTED AS SAYING HAD BEEN TO SET FORTH THE SPANISH POSITION AND REPORT BACK ON THE ATMOSPHERE ENCOUNTERED THERE.

3. IN DISCUSSION OF THE GENERAL TOPIC BEFORE OREJA'S PRESS CONFERENCE, THE FOREIGN MINISTRY'S CHIEF FOR NORTH AFRICA AND THE MIDDLE EAST (CAJAL) TOLD US HE EXPECTED THE ALGERIANS WOULD REFRAIN FROM PROMINENT POSITIONS OR ACTIVITIES CONTRARY TO SPANISH INTERESTS IN THE LIBERATION COMMITTEE MEETING, AND THAT IN THAT CASE MANUECO WOULD RETURN TO ALGIERS NEXT WEEK. CAJAL ALSO NOTED TO US HIS IMPRESSION THAT THE MFA'S WORKING LEVEL WAS NOT ENTIRELY PRIVY TO WHAT "THE GOVERNMENT" WAS UP TO IN THIS SITUATION. IN ANY CASE, IT REMAINS TO BE SEEN WHETHER CORTES APPROVAL OF FISHING AGREEMENT WITH MOROCCO WILL AFFECT ALGERIAN REACTION TO THIS SPANISH MOVE. STABLER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, AMBASSADORS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978MADRID01786
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: X1
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780076-0471
Format: TEL
From: MADRID
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780242/aaaabjfv.tel
Line Count: 78
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: b9f5a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 MADRID 1504, 78 MADRID 1756
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 27 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3563090
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPANISH AMBASSADOR TO ALGERIA RETURNS TO MADRID
TAGS: PEPR, OVIP, SS, MO, AG, SP, (MANUECO DE LECEA, DON GABRIEL)
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/b9f5a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014